



A Message from Our Director

wichealth Partners,

COVID-19 has made it very clear how unprepared we are as a nation for dealing with a pandemic of this nature. But at the same time, it has been refreshing to see how people have risen to the occasion. For example, a previous student of mine created a series of exercise routines that can be done at home via Instagram using just her own body weight. A neighbor has offered to walk the dog of another neighbor who is elderly and homebound. My current public health students volunteered and have become a major part of our university COVID-19 Response Task Force, where they have been charged with creating and disseminating public health-related social media messaging to all of our students. And my daughter has created a series of “Epidemiology 101” sessions she airs live every day to help laypersons understand what and how COVID-19 is spreading across the world. These are only a few of many who are doing what they can to ease the burden of this pandemic.

We know WIC is also under pressure as clinics begin to close and social distancing makes it difficult for all of you to serve your clients. But we are here to help. We are currently working with California to create and host a temporary lesson that will house their welcome to WIC videos as a means for assisting their clinics that are experiencing extreme COVID-19 ramifications. And being our state partners, your clients can continue to receive essential nutrition education

through wichealth, as our site is virtual and fits right in with a social distancing approach. But we are concerned about the clients in states that do not have a nutrition education platform where they can continue striving to improve parent-child feeding behaviors. As clinics start to minimize their services, we fear many WIC clients will halt and slip back on skills needed to effectively feed both themselves and their families. We decided to step up to the plate and provide aid to these states to help bridge this period of uncertainty. Within the next two days, we are going to reach out to the other states and ITOs and offer them the use of wichealth for at least the next 30 days as a means for their clients to receive nutrition education. Each subsequent month we'll work closely with any new partners to evaluate whether continuing the service is warranted. For any temporary partners, we are able to deliver a basic form of wichealth at no cost while they look for ways to continue serving their clients' nutrition education needs. We are not sure if any states will take us up on this offer, but it is one way we feel we can help mitigate the effects of this pandemic.

As always, we appreciate your partnership and are proud to be part of the solution for easing the burden of COVID-19.

Healthy regards,

Bob

Save the Date



Our next Steering Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, June 2, 2020 at 1:30 ET.

Social Distancing in the New

Tomorrow

by Katie Rottner

As has been made abundantly clear in the past few days, weeks, and months, our world is inextricably interconnected. Whether we are talking about worrisome new viruses or daunting environmental challenges, what happens to some of us, in essence, happens to all of us.



Recently, health experts have urged us toward social distancing. As by now we are all aware, this social distancing is designed to keep us safe.

By sequestering ourselves in our own homes, surrounded only by our closest family members, we reduce our risk of transmission of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel Coronavirus.

This social distancing is for the social good: to keep hospitals and hospital staff from becoming overwhelmed with patients succumbing to a multiplying virus. But, it also poses challenges to our well-being in other ways. Jobs and wages are disrupted. Schools are closed, or they are only providing online instruction. And amidst a pre-existing [epidemic of loneliness](#) in our world, humans are becoming increasingly isolated from each other.

What is the relevance of this subject in the context of wichealth.org? Well, wichealth.org is an online learning experience that is not disrupted by social distancing. Although our employees have additional concerns to contend with, our work is able to continue relatively unaffected. As an online service provider, we continue to address our community's needs and concerns while remaining socially distant in the physical sense. In the emotional, psychological, and educational sense, however, we are able to remain as present as ever. Our lessons offer ways for WIC parents and guardians to improve the

health and well-being of their families. The learning experiences we provide are catered to the unique stage in which each participant finds themselves. We are uniquely situated to address the needs of this moment and to continue helping families make healthy choices in worrying times. In an epoch of disruption, we are privileged to be able to stand firm in our commitment to WIC families.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

It is our fervent hope that the social distancing recommendations succeed in limiting the transmission of COVID-19. In the event that it is successful, it stands to reason that social distancing interventions will be used with more frequency in the future. In this case, services like the online learning environment offered by wichealth.org will find themselves more and more in demand. As centers of higher learning adapt to provide more digital classwork, we at wichealth.org are proud to have a strong history of creating online lessons. As we continue to adapt and evolve in our work, we are creating online behavior change strategies that succeed in changing the course of human lives - even through global disruption. We are equipped to stand firm in our service, both in times of pandemic and in times of peace. And the reason we are so equipped is because of the support and partnership of our participating WIC agencies. You saw the value in our online service, and because of you, we have been able to grow and expand our services.

These are trying times. It can be scary out there. And we understand that things feel shaky, especially for the vulnerable populations we work for. We want to thank you for your leadership in providing good nutrition to the families and individuals who need it in your community. And we want to thank you for your support in helping us grow and continue to offer our services, even in this time of social distancing.

Welcome New Steering Committee Members

Welcome

It is our pleasure to welcome the following individuals to the Steering Committee:

- Heather Kristofzski-Raizor - Ohio WIC Program
- Mark Nielsen – Utah WIC Program
- Jillian Weyant – Virginia WIC Program
- Connie Fox – Muscogee Creek Nation WIC Program
- Kari Malone – Wisconsin WIC Program
- Jennifer Whitaker – Florida WIC Program
- Lindsay Heffernon – Wisconsin WIC Program

The Steering Committee provides input to wichealth.org staff which helps to ensure WIC clients receive effective and relevant nutrition messaging while encouraging behavior change and improving health outcomes.

The Steering Committee meets once a quarter through a videoconferencing service to share updates, discuss issues, and provide suggestions and guidance to enhance wichealth.org content and services.

If you have questions regarding the Steering Committee, email GearhartD2@michigan.gov.

Vaccinate Your Family

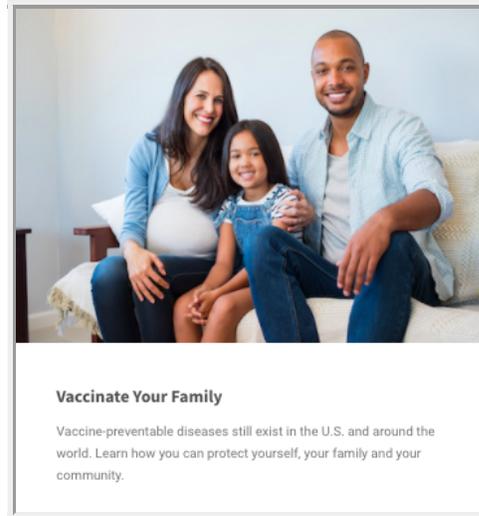
Now Available

Our newest lesson ***Vaccinate Your Family*** is now available for your clients.

You can view the lesson by logging in to wichealth using the information below:

username: wichealthdemo

password: Wich3alth!



The lesson can be found under Healthy Families. Be sure to scroll towards the bottom and look under "Completed Lessons."

Email Kimbra.quinn@wmich.edu to make the lesson available for your clients.

Lesson Maintenance

This past month, three lessons were reviewed and updated in English and Spanish:

- ***Choose MyPlate***
- ***Make Meals and Snacks Simple***
- ***Making Healthy Meals***

Spanish Review Team

The wichealth.org Spanish Review Team provides input on the Spanish side of the wichealth site. We focus on ways to more

effectively meet the needs of WIC participants whose primary language is Spanish.

At our last meeting on March 6, we discussed an issue that frequently arises when preparing Spanish versions of lessons. Some websites and videos included in English language lessons are available only in English, and it's often difficult to find the same or comparable materials in Spanish. We discussed whether we should omit these items or leave them in the lessons with a note that they are only in English. The Spanish Review Team recommended that we include these materials in the lessons along with a note saying "available in English only." Many Spanish-speaking wichealth users have someone in their household who can help them by viewing the information with them and explaining the content.

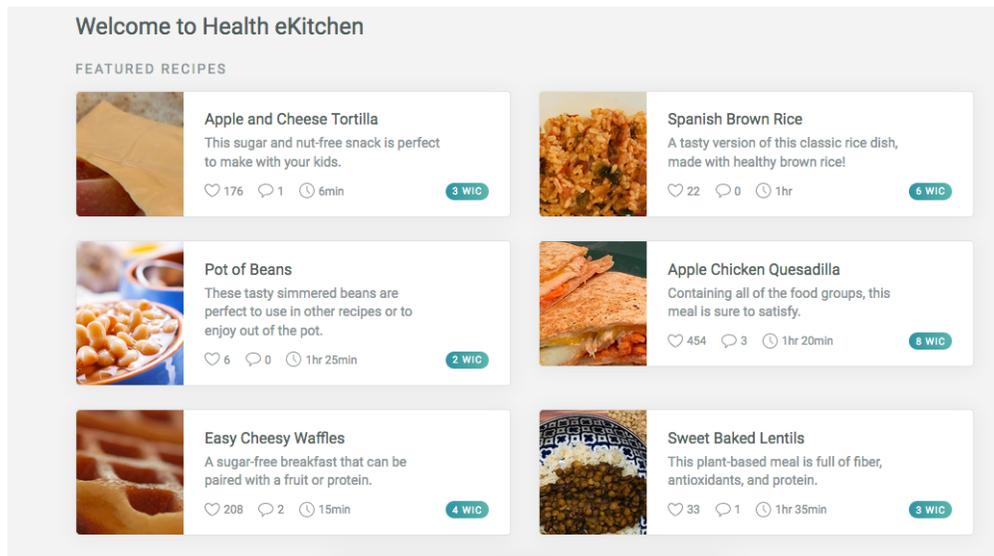
The Spanish Review Team meets quarterly for about one hour. Spanish-speaking staff at the local or state level are welcome to join us to provide input on wichealth services for Spanish-speaking clients! Please email Poppy Strode at poppystrode@gmail.com for further information.

Health eKitchen

Recipes of the Month

What's new in ***Health eKitchen***? This month's featured recipes!

Each month we choose six to eight recipes to highlight for our clients. Often these recipes are based on the season of the year. This month, we decided to highlight quick, nutritious recipes that haven't received many views from our clients.



Additionally, this month's recipes are very budget-friendly, which is especially important during this precarious time in our nation's history. Give yourself a treat and visit **Health eKitchen** today. We're sure you'll find delicious possibilities for you and your clients.

Ways to Share the Benefits of Online Education with Spanish-Speaking WIC Participants

Many Spanish-speaking WIC participants tend to prefer in-person education for social support and camaraderie. Nevertheless, given their busy lives, many are discovering the benefits of online education. And in this time of COVID-19 safety measures, nearly the entire US population is learning how to use remote methods for education, communication, and so much more!

Online WIC education can help to provide more flexibility and convenience, while still effectively promoting healthy eating and physical activity behaviors in WIC families. Lessons are reviewed for scientific accuracy and health literacy principles such as plain language, reading level, format, and graphic design. They are written based on tested behavior change theories. Each lesson is individualized to the participant's interests and readiness for change.

Also, many participants enjoy the added benefit of the recipes available through **Health eKitchen (Cocina Saludable)**.

Promotion materials for wichealth.org are available in Spanish!

To access the materials:



1. Log in to wichealthsupport.org with your staff account
2. Select “Resources”
3. Select “Promotional Materials”

The materials include these themes:

- Confíe en sus decisiones saludables (Trust in your healthy choices)
- Tranquilidad a la hora de comer (Mealtime peace)
- Recetas saludables que les encantarán a sus hijos (Healthy recipes your kids will love)
- Aproveche al máximo sus beneficios de WIC (Make the most of your WIC benefits)
- Recupere su tiempo (Recover your time)
- Abra la puerta al aprendizaje (Open the door to learning)

HELP DESK STATISTICS

FIRST REPLY TIME

March

2.63

February

4.24

SATISFACTION RATING

During the month of March, our help desk had a 98% satisfaction rating as compared to 95% in February.

Our Helpdesk tracks the satisfaction of both WIC staff and clients after using our service.

"I appreciate the quick, thorough and caring reply. Thank you.." - Michigan

"Quick and understandable." - Illinois

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